

Parsons Nursery, Workshop/Warehouse
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons
Parsons Vicinity
Tucker County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-C

HABS
WVA
47-PARSON,
IC

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

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PARSONS NURSERY, Workshop/Warehouse

Location: South side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West
Virginia

USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.614350.4327688

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest
Department of Agriculture
Sycamore Street, Box 1548
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Monongahela National Forest
Department of Agriculture

Last Use: Equipment Storage

Significance: The workshop/warehouse was built between
1928-1930 with Forest Service general
operating funds as a part of the Parsons
Nursery of the Monongahela National Forest.
This building housed pipe for the irrigation
system, an ammonium nitrate tank, machines
used in the nursery and the workshop where
machines and equipment were repaired. This
was the first storage building for the
Parsons Nursery. For overview of Parsons
Nursery, see HABS No. WV-237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1928, is derived from a construction drawing dated July, 1928 (WV-237-C-4). First record of the building is a photograph dated 1930 (WV-237-15).
2. Architect: Architect is uncertain, landscape architect is unknown. The plan/elevation sheet is signed by George W. Root, who was Examiner of Surveys for the Southern Region of Monongahela National Forest in 1926. The detail sheet is signed by W. I. Doty. Probably D. A. Oliver, nursery manager, Root, and Doty designed this and other early Parsons Nursery buildings.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: The workshop/warehouse was constructed by contract labor for Monongahela National Forest, according to John King.
5. Original Plans: Blue prints for construction two sheets is housed at the Monongahela National Forest Office in Elkins.
6. Alterations and additions: The building appears to have been constructed exactly as drawn. An open stringer stair has been added on the southeast. The center driveway that was originally dirt has a concrete pad. The wood floor of the workshop has been removed. A trap door used to remove irrigation pipe from the attic has been closed. To be demolished: 1990.

B. Historical Context:

The nursery office, original wash house, workshop/warehouse, garage (demolished), pump house, and water tank (demolished) were constructed before 1930. The workshop/warehouse was used for making planting seed bed sides, planting boards and other tools used at the nursery. There was a 7' deep pit for underground storage of a pressure tank. The tank held ammonium nitrate, used to fumigate the young seedlings (see photograph WV-237-A-4). The attic stored the aluminum pipe used in the Skinner above ground irrigation system. After the transfer of the nursery operation to the West Virginia Conservation Department (later Department of Natural Resources) in 1951, Alvin Allison had the outline of each tool painted on the walls of the workshop.

The nursery had a garage and two other storage buildings

constructed about the same time as this workshop/warehouse. These three buildings have been demolished. The garage housed a Ford truck that the nursery staff adapted for use in the nursery beds. The wheel base was changed to 6'-0" to conform to the width of a bed, 4'-0", and half of each path on either side of the beds. This truck was used for spreading sand and rye hay on the seeded beds. Later in the 1930s, D. A. Oliver had a Dodge truck he used for trips and errands. The storage buildings near the pump house were used for rye hay, the canvas transplant sheds, and other bulky objects. John King recalls spending summer, 1933, in the attic of one of these buildings waiting for the officer barracks at Camp Parsons to be completed.

There also was a shed built in the nursery beds for storage during the planting season. This building was moved in the mid-1930s to a site along the Black Fork River down stream from the pump house and other storage buildings. It was used for drying sand. The sand was collected along the banks of the Black Fork. It was dried and used to cover freshly planted seeds. Alvin Allison abandoned this practice because the river sand was filled with weed seeds. Instead, he used sawdust from the Fernow Experimental Forest.

The nursery closed after a flood in November, 1985. Since that date, Monongahela National Forest has used the workshop/warehouse for equipment and lumber storage.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The workshop/warehouse is one of a complex of Forest Service buildings constructed in a simple, rustic, gable-roofed, shingle style. This building uses native materials available in Monongahela National Forest, such as chestnut joists and sheathing. It follows the local convention of exterior diagonal wind-brace sheathing with herringbone, centered joints on both end walls and side walls.
2. Condition of fabric: Flood damage has removed shingles on the northwest corner of the building. The structure is square and has suffered no structural damage.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one-story, rectangular plan, this building is 44'-6" x 20'-4". There are three bays on the front facade, two bays across each end. It has an attic accessible by open stringer stairs.

2. Foundation: 8" poured concrete foundation with inaccessible crawl space. The driveway has a concrete poured pad between the two bays of the building.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are wood shingled with random width cedar sawn shingles applied in courses of 5" exposure. There are 5-1/2" plain yellow-painted corner boards on the gable corners; 2" corner boards on the front and rear. The foundation-roof height at the corner is 9'-7"; the height at the peak is 19'-9".
4. Structural system: The wood frame walls are "2x4's", on 16" centers, covered in "1x6" diagonal sheathing boards--a typical West Virginia mountain framing system--covered in a heavy tarred felt. The sills, wall plates, door and window frames are doubled "2x4's". Joists are "2x8's" on 23" centers. The rafters are "2x6's" on 23" centers covered in "1x6" tongue-and-groove sheathing. There is a "1x6" ridge piece. Some joists, rafters and sheathing is chestnut. A built-up beam of 4-"2x8's" on four piers spans the center of the north storage area. "2x8's" act as load spreaders at each pier. Beams and piers are chestnut.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: None.
6. Chimneys: 16" x 16" interior, wire-cut brick chimney with a three brick corbel that barely clears the roof peak. There is a stove hole 2' from the ceiling in the workshop.
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Front and rear center doorways have 4-1/2" jambs, 6" butt heads with a metal drip projecting 1/4". Each has two pocket doors, 7'-7" tall, 3" thick, with 4" side styles, 5" top and bottom styles. They have "1x6" diagonal pine sheathing on the outside and "1x6" vertical sheathing on the inside. Construction details of these doors are in surviving drawings. This door detail was used on other nursery structures. It is a major decorative feature. Doors and doorways are painted yellow.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Fenestration is different on each elevation, but all window frame and sash are similar. Jambs and heads are 4-1/2", butt-jointed. Sills are 1-1/2" with a 3-1/2" board below. Sash is 1/1. Attic windows and the three-part windows on the main floor are 3'-10" x 3'-0". All other windows are

4'-9" x 3'-0". One window shows evidence of hung, wooden storm sash. Window sash and trim is painted yellow. There never were window shutters.

8. Roof: The gable roof has asbestos shingles that have replaced original sawn cedar shingles. It has exposed rafter ends with a plain "2x8" fascia. On each gable end the "2x8" rake board is notched so that the "4x4" wall plate and "4x4" ridge piece extends 1/2" beyond the rake boards and has 1/4" bevelled edge. The rake board ends are clipped to meet the fascia. The gable overhang is 11-1/2" including the rake board; the eave overhang is 12", including the fascia. Until recently, there were wooden, rectangular yellow-painted gutters (see photograph WV-237-J-3). Cornice and rafter ends are painted yellow.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The rectangular building had storage in the north end, a workshop on the southwest corner, a pit for a pressure tank on the southeast corner, and a driveway between the north and south bays. Now the workshop is empty and the pressure tank storage is empty.
2. Stairways: There is an open stringer wooden stair to the attic (see sketch plan).
3. Flooring: The floor on the north and south east is random width 2" plank. The center driveway is concrete slab. The workshop floor has been removed, the foundation exposed, and the floor area covered in crushed limestone gravel.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Both walls and ceiling are exposed, unpainted framing. The workshop walls, attic knee walls and main floor pocket door casings are covered in 3-1/2" pine tongue-and-groove sheathing. The workshop walls are painted white above and green below the window sills. Ceiling height is 9'.
5. Openings: Doors have interior pockets 7'-7" x 5'-6", sheathed in pine. Windows have 4-1/2" jambs, 4" heads, butt jointed with 1/2" extension beyond the jambs. They have 1" ogee molded edge, 4-1/2" plain board below.
6. Decorative features and trim: The workshop has a wall hung cupboard 42" x 24" x 8-1/2" made of chestnut, with a pine, hinged door, brass-plated spring catch. It is mounted on the south wall in the southwest corner.

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7. Hardware: The east door hardware is the original cast iron pulls, 6" long. Each door is hung by 1-1/2" iron strap hangers. Each window has a brass-plated thumb lock and two thumb lifts.
 8. Mechanical equipment: There is no heat. Heat for the workshop was originally provided by a coal- or wood-fired stove. Present lighting is from ceiling-mounted porcelain bulb sockets. Wiring is exposed Greenfield cable. There is no plumbing.
 9. Original furnishings: None.
- D. Site: The building faces northeast, at 57°30'. It survives in its appropriate site together with most of the original nursery structures (see contemporary and historic photographs). There are two balsam firs (*Abies balsamea*), a red spruce (*Picea rubens*), and an arbor vitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) along the north-south entry road, a baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and a red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) south of the building (see sketch site plan). A concrete apron extends 11'-6" from the front doorway. The ground around the building is disturb, covered in river sand from a flood in November, 1985.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: two sheets, dated June, 1928, and 1928, located at Monongahela National Forest Offices, Elkins, WV.
- B. Historic views: Forest Service photographs, Monongahela National Forest Office, Elkins, WV.
- C. Interviews: Alvin Allison, 7-23-1989, Charleston, WV, Parsons Nursery supervisor, 1952-57; Londa Bennett, 6-11-1989, Davis, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1930-1939; John King, 8-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-39; Dorsey Knight, 10-24-1989, Parsons, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1932-1951.
- D. McKim, C. R., Monongahela National Forest History, unpublished manuscript, November, 1970.

Monongahela National Forest, Parsons Nursery, Building Location Plan, unpublished manuscript, 1928.

Monongahela National Forest, Parsons Nursery, Special Use Permit, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, unpublished manuscript, 1969.

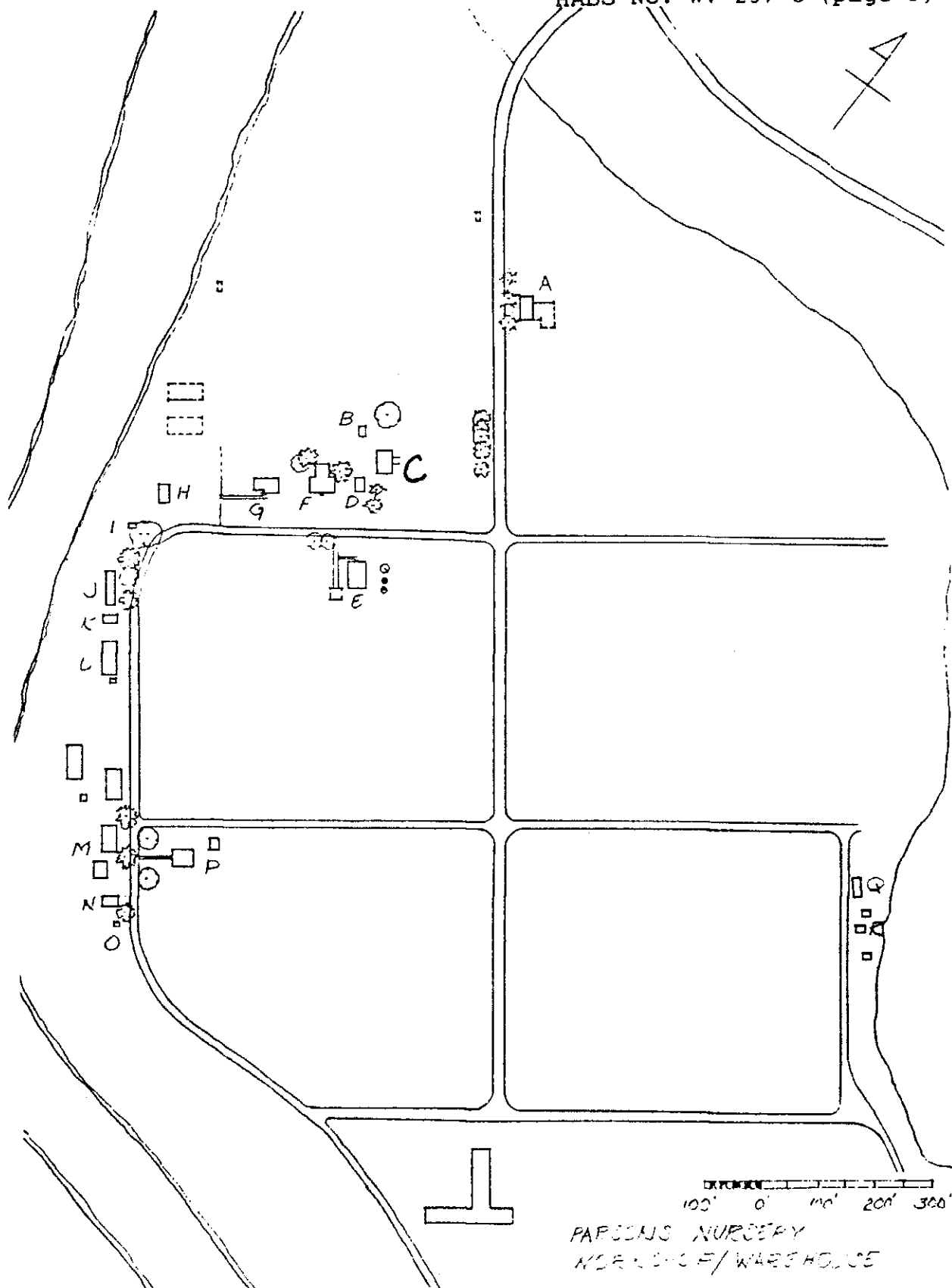
Pierce, R. G., Map Showing Blister Rust Control, Forest Service Nursery, Parsons, WV, unpublished manuscript, 1930.

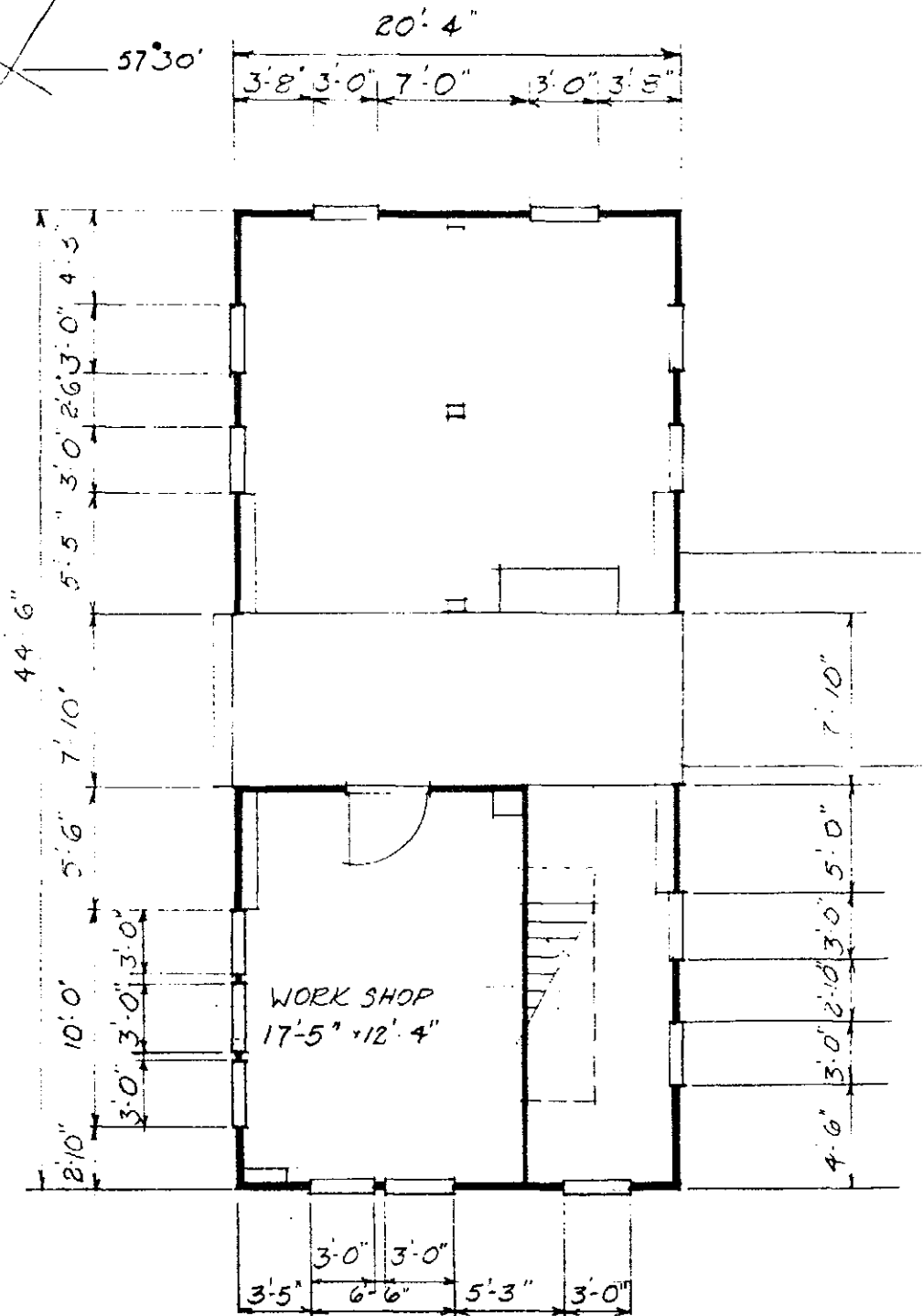
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery Bottom site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

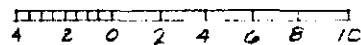
This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers, Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio, under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November, 1989.

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WORK SPACE / WAREHOUSE



10.4.89